

Washington State Department of Health
List of Approved On-Site Sewage System Additive Products
Updated October 1, 1999

Established Under: WAC 246-273, On-Site Sewage System Additives

Identifying additives

An additive is a commercial product sold under a claim that its use will improve the performance or aesthetics of an on-site sewage treatment system. These products, often called “septic tank additives”, are available to consumers through a variety of marketing routes that include retail shelves, mail order, and door to door sales. Customers make decisions to purchase additives based on information provided by advertising brochures, product labels, and spoken communication with telemarketers, pumpers, and local health agency staff. Advertising frequently states that additives counteract the effect of bleach and detergents, increase soil percolation, clear pipe deposits, or reduce odor.

The statutory requirements described throughout the following discussion pertain only to products that claim to influence performance or aesthetics of septic systems in Washington State. Common household products such as detergents, bleach, drain cleaners and toilet deodorant blocks are specifically excluded from the regulation. An additive product is identified by its claim. For example, two products designed to hang in a toilet bowl may have identical appearance and smell. The first being a deodorant block intended to freshen the room, the second being a fragrant substance dosed with each flush intended to improve treatment and keep lines clear. Only the second product meets the definition of an on-site sewage additive.

Background

In 1993, the Washington State Legislature found that “ most additives do not have a positive effect on the operation of on-site systems, and can contaminate groundwater aquifers, render septic drainfields dysfunctional, and result in costly repairs to homeowners. It is therefore the intent of the legislature to ban the use, sale, and distribution of additives within the state unless an additive has been specifically approved by the Department of Health.” In 1994, the legislature added “Chemical additives do, and other types may, contribute to septic system failure and groundwater contamination. In order to determine which ingredients of non-chemically based additive products have adverse effects on public health or the environment, it is necessary to submit such products to a review procedure.” After considering these findings, they enacted the Revised Code of Washington State Chapter 70.118 (RCW 70.118).

Its purpose is to:

- (1) Establish a timely and orderly procedure for reviewing and approving on-site sewage system additives; (2) Prohibit the use, sale, or distribution of additives that have an adverse effect on public health or water quality; (3) Require manufactures to disclose contents of additives that are advertised, sold or distributed in the state; and (4) Provide consumer protection.

RCW 70.118 assigned responsibility for establishing review procedures and criteria to the Washington State Department of Health. To fulfill this assignment, the department promulgated Washington State Administrative Code Chapter 246-273. The adopted rule became effective on

January 1, 1996. RCW 70.118 delegated authority to the Washington State Office of the Attorney General and city or county prosecuting attorneys for enforcing compliance.

Intent and significance of product approval

RCW 70.118 requires approval of additives by the Washington State Department of Health before use, sale or distribution. Scope of the evaluation is limited to identifying harmful ingredients. Product approval merely indicates that the ingredients are unlikely to cause harm. Denying approval removes harmful products from market availability. The product evaluation does not investigate the validity of performance claims by manufactures. For this reason, *departmental approval and subsequent listing in this document must not be interpreted as certifying effectiveness, endorsing or recommending use of an additive. The Washington State Department of Health also does not assume liability for any promise, guarantee or expectation from purchasing or using an additive.*

RCW 70.118 expressly prohibits manufactures from using the departmental approval for marketing purposes. Using the word “approved” in advertising material violates the statute. The Office of Attorney General of Washington recognized that manufactures need a means to make consumers aware of products deemed harmless by the Department of Health. They established the following policy to address this issue. Using the word “approved” is not allowed, but a product may be advertised as “complying with Washington laws regarding harm to public health and water quality.”

Disclosing information

RCW 70.18 requires manufactures to fully disclose ingredient information to the department for review. The department bases its decision upon this information. If the disclosed information is insufficient, the department may refuse to evaluate an additive. If a manufacturer submits false or inaccurate data any approval given on the basis of that data may be rescinded. Recognizing that some information may be proprietary, manufactures may identify “trade secrets” to the department and require the department to hold properly identified information confidential. Even though some would argue that ingredients could be a “trade secret,” RCW 70.118 requires the manufacturer to list all components on the label after the additive is approved. The word “component” according to the Webster dictionary means “a constituent element, or any of the minimum number of substances required to specify completely the composition of all phases of a chemical system.” This indicates that not only must every ingredient be listed, but includes any by-products that result from combining ingredients as well. Failure to comply does not affect the review process and is unlikely to affect the approval status or product listing in this document.

However, the manufacturer of an approved additive that does not comply with the requirement may be subject to legal action for an unfair business practice under the Consumer Protection Act RCW 19.86.

Evaluating information

Each additive is subjected to only one review and approval procedure. After the ingredients are deemed harmless and a product is approved, it is listed accordingly on page 5 of this document without additional activity or fee unless the formulation is modified. If ingredients are added, or if concentrations and proportions change, the manufacturer must initiate additional review action

by submitting information to the department for re-evaluation and approval. The department is not involved when modifying marketing materials, labels or brochures. The department invites manufacturers to provide data and documentation from actual field or laboratory-based studies or information purposes if it is available. This request is merely for information transfer purposes, not review or approval.

Product listing

The tables starting on page 5 identifies additive products that are approved up until the publishing date. Since this list is updated occasionally to include future approval determinations, it is imperative to indicate the edition date if referencing this document. Situations are likely to arise when the list does not identify products approved during the period between editions. If an additive appears on the market, which does not appear on your list, its status can be verified, or a most recent edition of this publication can be obtained by contacting:

Washington State Department of Health
Office of Environmental Health & Safety
PO Box 47825, Olympia WA. 98504-7825
(360) 236-3062, or FAX (360) 236-2257

Consumer protection

In addition to the general limitations on marketing, and advertising practices, manufactures of approved additives must also comply with specific consumer protection regulations defined by RCW 70.18 and repeated again in WAC 246-273. Consumer protection requirements are not among the criteria that influence product approval. It would be impossible for this one-time ingredient evaluation to accurately assess current or future marketing activities of manufactures and their distributors. For this reason, *product approval and listing does not constitute departmental approval of marketing, advertising or labeling practices employed by a manufacturer.*

When an additive is approved by the department, two significant changes occur immediately afterward. 1) It elevates status of the product so it can be sold or distributed; and 2) the manufacturer becomes responsible for continuous compliance with all of the specific consumer protection requirements listed in RCW 70.118.080 and WAC 246-273-060. The Attorney General, or appropriate city or county prosecuting attorney may bring appropriate action to enjoin any violations. The specific regulatory requirements for manufacturers are;

- (1) *Obtain approval of the additive by the Washington State Department of Health before selling, distributing, or using it in Washington State. If ingredients are modified after product approval, disclose information to the department for reevaluation and reapproval.*
- (2) *Do not claim the additive eliminates need for septic tank pumping or proper system maintenance.* A manufacturer must not claim the product reduces the necessity or frequency of septicage removal. The operation and maintenance responsibilities assigned to system owners in Washington State are described by Section 15501 of WAC 246-272. Copies of this regulation are available from the Washington State Department of Health.

- (3) *List all additive components on the product label, along with information regarding instructions for use and precautions.* This means all ingredients and reaction byproducts must be listed, along with instructions and precautions on a label affixed to the outside surface of each container. This provides consumers a means to make informed decisions about the product before opening the container, and gives them an opportunity to read warnings or directions before being exposed to its contents.
- (4) *Make no false statements, design, or graphic representation relative to the additive product inconsistent with RCW 70.118.060, 70.110.070, or 70.118.080.* Manufactures must disclose complete and accurate information to the department for review, accurately identify specific trade secrets, and not make false advertising or marketing statements.
- (5) *Do not make any claim, either direct or implied about the performance of the product based on the approval of its ingredients by the Department of Health.* This means the manufacturer can not use the departmental approval in any graphic, verbal or written form of advertising or marketing activity.

In addition to the specific requirements of RCW 70.118 described above, manufacturers must also meet all other federal and state obligations intended to protect consumers. These additional obligations extend beyond the scope of this discussion. Direct any requests for additional information regarding consumer protection issues, reports of apparent noncompliance, or complaints about advertising or marketing practices to:

The Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division
900 Fourth Avenue #2000
Seattle WA 98164-1012
(206) 464-7030

LIST OF APPROVED ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEM ADDITIVE PRODUCTS
As of October 1, 1999

Additive Product	Company	Address
AQUATERRA GHSD-1	Aquaterra Biochemical Corporation	1917 Lancaster-Hutchins Road Lancaster TX 75146 (214) 438-0941 (1-800-527-7850)
AQUATERRA LS-1472	Aquaterra Biochemical Corporation	1917 Lancaster-Hutchins Road Lancaster TX 75146 (214) 438-0941 (1-800-527-7850)
BIO BLAST	Morganics	13610 N Scottsdale Rd #10 Scottsdale AZ 85254 (602) 483-2977
BIOCHARGE	In-sink-erator Division Emerson Electric Company	4700 21 st Street Racine WI 53406 (414) 554-3594
BI-CHEM SM700	Biochemical Waste Treatment Products Sybron Chemicals Incorporated	PO Box 66 Birmingham Rd NJ 08011 (609) 893-1100 (1-800-678-0020)
BIO CHOICE ES	Osprey Biotechnics	530 Trailmate Dr. Sarasota FL 34243 (941) 755-7770
BIO-CLEAN	Kinzie & Payne Bio Chemical Corporation	953 Gardenvue Office Parkway St Louis MO 63141 (314) 567-1145
BIO-GREEN	Delta Bioproducts International	7343 El Camino Real Suite 320 Atascadero CA 93422 1-800-456-5630
BIO KLEER S	Bio Aqua Enterprises Inc.	15282 19 th Avenue Unit 106 Surrey BC Canada V4A 1X6 (604) 538-4986
BIO-JET-7	Jet Inc.	750 Alpha Dr. Highland Heights OH 44143 (216) 461-2000 (1-800-321-6960)
DRAIN CARE-SEPTIC TANK TREATMENT	Enforcer Products Inc.	PO Box 1060 Cartersville GA 30120-1060 (770) 386-0801
DRAIN OUT ENZYME SEPTIC TREATMENT	Iron Out Inc.	1515 Dividend Rd. Fort Wayne IN 46808 (540) 389-8220
DRAIN CARE LIQUID SEPTIC TANK TREATMENT	Enforcer Products Inc.	PO Box 1060 Cartersville GA 30120-1060 (770) 386-0801
DRANO PLUMBING SYSTEM BUILDUP REMOVER	S C Johnson & Son Inc.	1525 Howe St. Racine WI 53403-7826 (414) 260-4263
DWT 360 SEPTIC TANK MAINTAINER / also called WT 360 WASTE DEGRADER	Tri-Synergy Inc.	2010 Palsero Avenue Escondido CA 921029 (619) 744-6076
ECO-SAVE ES-700	Eco-Save Products JWH Distributing	1000 McDonald Avenue Santa Rosa CA 95404 (707) 579-0643
GREASE TANK TREATMENT	Roebic Laboratories Inc.	25 Conair Rd. Orange CT 06477 (203) 795-1283

Additive Product	Company	Address
GSI 4000	General Supply Inc.	201 North 2 nd Avenue Yakima WA 98902 (509) 248-1242
INSTANT POWER SEPTIC TANK/CESSPOOL CLEANER	Scotch Corp	610 E Tenth St. Dallas TX 1917 1-800-334-2077
INSTANT POWER SEPTIC TANK/CESSPOOL CLEANER	Aquaterra Biochemical Corp.	1917 Lancaster Hutchins Rd. Lancaster TX 75146 (214) 438-0941 (1-800-527-7850)
INSTANT POWER SEPTIC TANK TREATMENT	Aquaterra Biochemical Corp.	1917 Lancaster Hutchins Rd. Lancaster TX 75146 (214) 438-0941 (1-800-527-7850)
LIQUID ALIVE	Dymon Inc.	PO Box 340 Olathe KS 66051-0340 (913) 397-9889
L.E.A.D. ENZYME DIGESTANT	Formula Corp.	7901 2 nd Avenue S Seattle WA 98108 (206) 762-7000
LIQUID LIVE	Formula Corp.	7901 2 nd Avenue S Seattle WA 98108 (206) 762-7000
LIQUID PLUMR SEPTIC SYSTEM TREATMENT	Clorox Co.	7200 Johnson Dr. Pleasanton CA 94588
MICROBE LIFT	Ecological Laboratories	70 North Main St. Freeport NY 11520 (513) 379-3441 (1-800-645-2976)
MICROBE-LIFT SEPTIC TANK POWDER PACKETS	Ecological Laboratories Inc.	70 North Main St. Freeport NY 11520 (516) 379-3441 (1-800-645-2976)
MICROBE-LIFT/ST SEPTIC DIGESTANT	Ecological Laboratories Inc.	70 North Main St. Freeport NY 11520 (516) 379-3441 (1-800-645-2976)
PLUMB-CLEAN	Kinzie & Payne BioChem Corp	953 Gardenvue Office Parkway St Louis MO 63141 (314) 567-1145
PRO-PUMP COLD WEATHER POWDERED DIGESTANT	Ecological Laboratories Inc.	70 N Main St. Freeport NY 11520 (516) 379-3441 (1-800-645-2976)
PRO-PUMP POWDERED DIGESTANT FOR SEPTIC TANK AND LEACHFIELDS	Ecological Laboratories Inc.	70 N Main St. Freeport NY 11520 (516) 379-3441 (1-800-645-2976)
PRO-PUMP SEPTIC DIGESTANT	Ecological Laboratories Inc.	70 N Main St. Freeport NY 11520 (516) 379-3441 (1-800-645-2976)
RID-X ADVANCED FORMULA	Reckitt & Coleman Inc.	225 Summit Avenue Montvale NJ 07645 (201) 573-5673
RID-X ULTRA	Reckitt & Coleman Inc.	225 Summit Avenue Montvale NJ 07645 (201) 573-5673
ROEBIC K-37 SEPTIC TANK TREATMENT	Roebic Laboratories Inc.	25 Conair Rd. Orange CT 06477 (203) 795-1283

Additive Product	Company	Address
ROEBIC K-47	Roebic Laboratories Inc.	25 Conair Rd. Orange CT 06477 (203) 795-1283
ROEBIC K-57	Roebic Laboratories Inc.	25 Conair Rd. Orange CT 06477 (203) 795-1283
ROEBIC K-87 SOAP DIGESTER FMP SOAP DEGRADER	Roebic Laboratories Inc.	25 Conair Rd. Orange CT 06477 (203) 795-1283
ROEBIC K-97 MAINLINE CLEANER	Roebic Laboratories Inc.	25 Conair Rd. Orange CT 06477 (203) 795-1283
ROEBIC LIQUID GREASE DEGRADER, GREASE TRAP TREATMENT	Roebic Laboratories Inc.	25 Conair Rd. Orange CT 06477 (203) 795-1283
ROTO-ROOTER TREATMENT FOR SEPTIC TANKS AND CESSPOOLS	Roto-Rooter Corp.	300 Ashworth Rd. Des Moines IA 50314 (515) 223-1343
SEA-ZYME SEPTIC TANK DIGESTER 2000	Century Products	601 South Hudson Tacoma WA 98409 (253) 475-9091
SEPTIC HELPER 2000	Shar Lane Distributing Co.	596 Anderson Avenue Cliffside Park NJ 07010 (201) 943-7900
SEPTIC-PLUS	Nikmar Enterprises Inc.	525 Bergen Rd. Ridgefield NJ 07657 (201) 945-5558
SEPTONIC SEPTIC TANK ADDITIVE	AHT Field & Co.	45 Braid St. New West Minster BC V#L 2P3 Canada (604) 527-8113
SUPER PACK BACTERIA	Septiclear Inc.	6233SE Fern St. Portland OR 97206 (503) 774-9559
SEPTIC TANK AIDS	Amway Corp.	7575 E Fulton Rd. Ada MI 49355 (616) 787-5428
SEPTIC TECHNOLOGIES SMN 100	Septic Technologies	4508 SW Atlantic St. Seattle WA 98116 (206) 550-9995
TRI-ZYME SEPTIC ACTIVATOR	Microbiological Laboratories Inc.	8622 228 th Kent WA 98035 (206) 850-8252
ULTRA GREEN 3 ENZYME CLEANER	Iron Out Inc.	1515 Dividend Rd. Fort Wayne IN 46808 (540) 389-8220
ULTRA RID-X	Reckitt & Coleman Inc.	225 Summit Avenue Montvale NJ 07645 (201) 573-5673